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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7182
INFO RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY 2706
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 7569
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY
RUEHBP/AMEMBASSY BAMAKO PRIORITY 0907
RUEHNM/AMEMBASSY NIAMEY PRIORITY 1884
RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT PRIORITY 6699
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY 9208
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 3080
RUEHMRE/AMCONSUL MARSEILLE PRIORITY 1730
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 000246

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR DRL/NESCA MHIKEY

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [AG](#)

SUBJECT: MFA COMPLAINS THAT HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT DOES NOT

REFLECT REALITY

REF: ALGIERS 235

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i. Thomas F. Daughton;
reasons 1.4 (b and d).

11. (C) MFA Director General for the Americas (A/S-equivalent) Fatiha Selmane summoned the Charge to the MFA on March 11 to express the Algerian government's "disappointment and unhappiness" with the conclusions of the 2008 Human Rights Report (HRR). Selmane said the report was identical to prior years' reports and did not reflect reality. She also asserted that the report was subjective and ignored or downplayed examples of the steps Algeria has taken to improve its human rights record. "Even when you mention positive examples, you qualify them with phrases beginning with 'however,' or 'but,'" she added. Selmane also complained that too many issues pertaining to Algeria's decade of violence in the 90s remain in the report: "This ignores the efforts we undertook under the national reconciliation charter to resolve the crisis and put the past behind us," she said.

12. (C) Selmane said that the MFA's concerns with the report reflected the sentiment of other Algerian officials, notably Prime Minister Ouyahia, who believe the HRR is counterproductive. Charge pointed out that Interior Minister Zerhouni and Algeria's Ambassador to the U.S. provided constructive criticism of the report, but that some of Prime Minister Ouyahia's comments were less helpful. Selmane defended Ouyahia's remark that the U.S. should "sweep in front of its own door before sweeping in front of others' doors," and repeated the statement that after Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantanamo, the U.S. had no business pointing its finger at others. Selmane chose, however, not to address Ouyahia's separate comment that the HRR was motivated by Algeria's refusal to maintain diplomatic relations with Israel and its refusal to host U.S. military forces.

13. (C) COMMENT: Selmane delivers a similar version of this demarche every year. In general, there have been few surprises in the government's reaction to the 2008 HRR, except perhaps the measured tone of Interior Minister Zerhouni's comment that the report "contained some positive examples." Among others who offered their insight, MSP (Muslim Brotherhood) President Aboudjerra Soltani argued that it was unfair for the U.S. to judge Algeria's young democracy by Western criteria (reftel). Ouyahia's tirade about a U.S. double standard vis-a-vis our policies on Iraq, Afghanistan

and Guantanamo detainees was predictable, but his conspiratorial remark about U.S. military forces and Israel was not. Zerhouni's unusually diplomatic response, which appeared the next day, smacked of an attempt to qualify Ouyahia's awkward rhetoric.

DAUGHTON